563 acquiring a reputation among the superstitious Bahutu of being
[154] great sorcerers and have made themselves greatly feared for this reason. Also, the priesthood works hand in hand with them to enslave and exploit the people (see p. 134). The exploita-
563 tion of the mass of the people and the crass egoism of the small
642 Batussi minority are made possible by the whole ingenious political system of both the Barundi and the Banjaruanda, with its strict legal separation of races and castes, with the rigidly graded system of vassals and supervising officials, the hierarchy of priests, privileged families, princes, etc. All this will be described in detail in later chapters of this book. The astonishing political acumen of the Batussi merely promotes the selfishness with which they exploit the subject Bahutu. There is no trace of any higher conception of the state.

For this reason it is natural that the Bahutu regard the
563 Batussi only as conquerors of a different tribe whose yoke weighs
181 heavily on them. Yet, although they hate the Batussi, they make no effort to free themselves from their bondage for, like almost all Negro peoples, their nature necessitates subordination under a firm guiding hand. Moreover, their fear of the Batussi is so great that they would not hazard an open rebellion against them. Indeed, though few in numbers, the Batussi are vastly
563 superior to the Bahutu in intelligence and in the fact that a
186 solidarity exists among them which is constantly being renewed under the impulse of common interests. The Bahutu, on the other hand, are split up into a number of mutually warring clans and tribal groups, lack any sort of genuine national consciousness, and are being played off against each other in an ingenious manner by the Batussi.

000 As long as the Batussi are the rulers in the country, an intellectual and cultural revival of the Barundi people is impossible, for it is only the present depressed condition of the Bahutu, maintained through hundreds of years of seclusion, that guarantees the domination of the Batussi. For the time being, however, we Germans must collaborate with the Batussi and interest them materially in our projects in Urundi since we are still too weak to meet an open attack on their part. The goal of our long term colonial policy, however, must be to crush the

726 performing all kinds of sorcery in order to hurt the enemy. The chief accompanies his troops to the battle field only in really big wars when it is a matter of survival for the whole state.
[782] Sacrifices to the protective spirits are made on the border stream --
[811] the borders are mostly formed by streams -- poisonous powders
787 are spread on the paths used by the enemy, the future is read
726 from the entrails of sheep and chickens, and arrangements are made accordingly. If possible, the sorcerer even arranges for one of the holy cattle (ingabe) to be sent against the enemy. If it penetrates the enemy's ranks this is regarded as a good omen to which even the enemy will submit; however, if it turns back in front of the enemy, it is regarded as a bad omen, and negotiations for peace are begun (No. 19, p. 277).

If in spite of all this an open battle takes place, one side will soon take to flight after a few men have been killed or
727 wounded by spears or arrows. The victors then pounce on the homesteads and burn them, after looting everything of value, especially the cattle. Upon their return, the women receive them with jubilant trilled cries. This marks the beginning of a feast with dancing, drinking, and eating meat, which often lasts several weeks, as long as the chief provides beer and cattle. If the enemy chief has been captured, he is usually killed.
721 Peace is hardly ever concluded. Usually a feud between chiefs is passed on to son and grandchild, according to the unwritten laws of vendetta. Thus, there is continual strife in the country unless a stronger hand enforces the peace. Our colonial forces
[648] have had to do this several times and with success whenever there was a dangerous disturbance of the peace in our colony. Yet, according to a very wise governmental ordinance, the German Resident is not permitted to intervene in unimportant internal conflicts. The same applies to Ruanda where bloody quarrels occur often enough. For this reason these fights will continue for a long time, [88] until with the progressive effective occupation of the country by our troops they die down completely.

● 642 Until the German occupation, Urundi was a unified kingdom for many centuries. Of course this is true only with respect to its historical development and name, for in reality quite a

642 number of the leading men of the country had become more or less independent of the king. As we shall see in the historical survey (p. 166 [not translated]), the government recognized the independence of a few of these chiefs after the death of old King Kisabo. Even there, however, the people still regard the distant king -- who it is true has become almost a phantom for them -- as the supreme authority of the realm in many respects, especially in religious matters.

643 Theoretically, the king is the absolute ruler of all of Urundi. Whoever does not submit to him is a renegade and a revolutionary. In the last analysis this claim to royal supremacy is founded on the fact that the king is descended from the old ruling family, the Baganwa, and is regarded and revered as an almost divine being. In this capacity he is the head of the national religion and the religious head of the nation, regardless of the personal characteristics of the king who is ruling at any one time. If, in addition to the religious respect which he enjoys, the king is prudent and strong-willed, as the bearer of the "crown" he will have no difficulty in enforcing his claim to be the sole ruler in the whole of Urundi. This is proved by the history of Urundi.

In both Urundi and Ruanda, also in Ufipa (No. 47, p. 29), the official title of the king is umwami, i.e., he who rose to authority. The Urundi king is also referred to as the njen' ingoma, the possessor of the (holy) drum, or as umvijéji, father, master.

644 [793] The person closest to the king is the umufumu w'umwami, the "house chaplain," high priest. Generally he is a highly intelligent man who in all cases is attached to the semidivine king and who also is the first to advise him in mundane matters.

[791] A "court kiranga," a chief magician or sorcerer, assists the high priest. Among the officials of the court, there are masters of the kitchen, butchers, firewood keepers, stable masters, water suppliers, cow milkers, night watchmen, the bodyguard, and others. As far as political personalities are concerned, there are in the entourage of the king representatives of the great head men, the governors of the provinces, just as at the court of Musinga of Ruanda. Here, as well as in Ruanda, it is often the governors themselves who temporarily or permanently are drawn

614 vehicle of tradition and religious customs (totem, food taboos,
182 sacrificial community), has been of great importance in sustaining the nation's life." (No. 39, p. 73.) This characterization also applies to the clans of the Barundi.

614 However, the Batussi monarchy is a most powerful enemy
642 of the clan organization. The growing power of the Batussi kings has laid claim, as has been shown above, to all the land and
182 cattle as the personal property of the king who parcels it out in larger or smaller portions as fiefs to his Batussi followers (see p. 89). The king's vassal, in turn, divides his fief into smaller portions with which he vests his people. The former clan elder is usually appointed mutwale of the king and collects the taxes and other tribute of which he retains a share. Under the conquering kings the clan has thus been disrupted socially and economically and has been rather quickly absorbed into the political feudal community of the state, although it may still retain its clan name, its old customs, some of its institutions, and its totem for a long time to come.

642 There is one element of the old clan organization which
614 the clan members have retained even under the political reorganization of the Batussi monarchy since it offers them a
628 strong protection against arbitrary acts of their rulers: it is
182 the vendetta (kuhora). Originally, allied clans used it as the most effective way to protect themselves when they were threatened by other clans. Even at the present time the vendetta is the strongest bulwark for the protection of the individual in spite of the fact that public and private security has considerably increased under the strong rule of the royal batwale. Despite criminal jurisdiction administered by the batwale, the vendetta is still used by the clan members as the most effective form of self-help and as a protective instrument of intimidation on the part of those who are politically weak. A person who kills or injures a member of a clan is killed or wounded by the members of the wronged clan (see p. 97). If the wrongdoer cannot be apprehended, the vendetta will strike another member of the criminal's clan. Indeed, more than that, some clans

642 may not be satisfied by equal retribution but avenge the loss
614 of one of their members by killing two or more members of the
628 opposite clan. In former times this created a permanent state
182 of war within the nation, no large-scale political community could develop, and the resistance of the Barundi against external aggression was extremely weakened. The same was true of Ruanda (No. 48, p. 238). It was only the strong monarchy of the Batussi which, in its own interest, put an end to this permanent civil guerrilla warfare. However, now the clans use the vendetta for the protection of their members under the cover of secrecy. The former open guerrilla warfare has turned into insidious murder against which even the most powerful Batussi mutwale is not secure if he is guilty of bloody acts of violence against some clan. The effect of this avenging popular justice and the manner in which it is regarded by the people are reminiscent of our Vehmgericht of medieval times, although they are both quite different in other respects.

[106] Chapter 8

Marriage, Birth, Death

1. Contracting Marriage, Wife, Children

582 In most cases the Barundi are married (kurongora) at quite an early age: the men as soon as they can pay the bride price; the girls often at the age of twelve or even younger if they are [589] nubile. It is very rare that a man voluntarily remains a bachelor. If someone marries late, the only reason is that he is unable to raise the bride price, i.e., the purchase price of a wife. Marriages are exogamous; there are no cases of marriage within 583 the same clan (see p. 100). Bride stealing is unknown as a 685 marriage custom. If, under exceptional circumstances, it does occur it is treated as a case of common theft (No. 19, p. 358). 595 Concubinage is practiced particularly in the case when the son of a mutwale or a chief has to wait for a girl of equal rank to

224 They climb trees like squirrels to escape danger or to be on the lookout.
[48] They may spend a week or even two without returning home when tracking game, especially if an elephant is at stake. The wooded area is their domain. They know its thickets and crannies, and they track animals everywhere, stealthily through thorns and scrub, without ever running the risk of getting lost.

361 Pygmies live in groups of six or seven families scattered through
423 the forest, which they have divided up like family property by settling their respective boundaries so as not to get in each other's way.

578 Hunting in a forbidden zone or even in a contested one has given rise to more than one bloody quarrel among brothers and friends.

There are hardly 15 of such groups of Negrillo hunters, who would find it hard to subsist if meat were their only food.

311 Willfully set fires for clearing purposes which have impoverished the forested land, as well as new political conditions which are gradually transforming the society, contribute to the dwindling of their food resources.

Soon, therefore, we may see the last representatives of those woodsmen join their other compatriots, the potters scattered through the Bahutu villages, or else start farming as some of them are already doing.

563 The Batwa live as a group apart. They do not mix with the Bahutu and much less with the Batutsi. They are a despised caste.

631 Ruanda was not politically united from the beginning. In the following pages we shall see that it was parceled /37/ into a considerable number of tiny kingdoms and small independent principalities. The lands inhabited for the longest time seem to have been the Ndorwa, Buganza, Gissaka, and Bugessera in the northeast, the Nduga and Munyambiriri in the center, and the Bwana-Mkali in the southeast. The areas located in the northwest, the Mulera, Bugoyi, Bgisha, Kanage, etc., were slowly won over the forest and settled by people who came from neighboring regions.

642 Politically, Ruanda is an absolute monarchy.

The Banyarwanda belong to the type of society that is "more stratified, characterized by the establishment of a centralized power whose automatically binding warrants are transmitted to the humblest

[i.e., the Batwa. - Analyst]

642 individuals through a continuous chain of lesser chiefs." This regime resulted from the invasion and conquest of Ruanda by the Hamites. The monarchical system was introduced by them in order "to keep the subject people within a very tight administrative network." (1) Ac-

1. Les Relations entre l'évolution sociale et l'évolution religieuse /The Relations between Social and Religious Evolution/ by Rev. Fr. Pinard de la Boullaye, S. J. (Gorrespondant, January 25, 1929.)

cording to the classification adopted by Deniker (2), the Banyarwanda

2. Races et peuples de la terre /Races and Peoples of the Earth/, 1900, p. 151.
Deniker divides peoples into savage, semicivilized, and civilized.

belong in their degree of culture to the first group by the Bahutu and Batwa, but it is also proper to place them in the second category on account of the Hamites, who gave their conquered subjects an organization superior to that of the peoples in the first stage and a higher degree of culture. They form an intermediate group between the first two divisions of this classification.

643 The land is governed by a king with unlimited and hereditary powers (we are speaking of the past). The symbol of royalty is a drum, a sacred object, a sort of palladium referred to as Kalinga. /38/

Like all African potentates, the Hamitic prince formerly held powers of life and death over his subjects. Everything belonged to him in his own right, lands and people, crops and livestock. He
631 would designate the dignitaries and the provincial governors, who were almost invariably chosen from the ranks of the Batutsi, the noble and conquering race.

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ibgami, "at the king's." In speaking of the ancient royal residences, they use the noun umurwa, plural imirwa, or else ikigabiro, plural ibigabiro. As for the term umuhango (plural imihango), it signifies "mores, customs, traditions," hence the name Abanyamihango given to the "keepers of the customs."

[642] We remind the reader that the native government is an absolute and hereditary monarchy.

643 The sovereign is master of the land and all it contains; he deals with the life and goods of his subjects as he pleases. Until recently his power knew no bounds of any sort and was wholly dependent upon [776] his whims or good will. Imana (God) was no more powerful than he. Any attempt to draw a comparison between the two was formerly [687] regarded as a crime of high treason. God and the King could, at best, be one and the same person.

641 The subjects, therefore, tended to be regarded as things from which to draw as much pleasure and well-being as possible.

Their own worth and usefulness were assessed and measured only with reference to the king. Let us add that the welfare of the kingdom, although it was not disregarded, could only come second in the thoughts of the king. Prior to the arrival of the Europeans, 644 the dignitaries of the realm to whom the king assigned the government of the provinces were compelled to spend most of their time at court. The Hamitic princes were very eager to keep the nobility close to them. They were always on the alert and daily surveyed the lords and courtiers who surrounded them (2). The latter belong /349/ almost

2. From Saint Simon we learn that the situation was the same under Louis XIV. "It is a demerit

grown sons are listed below them, and this shows that the average size of a family with its servants is about six persons, three or four of which occupy one hut. The number of huts is almost identical with the number of women. It is very important to note that the head of the Baishaza clan community, the mugabo, Ndiramiye, is one of the poorest farmers on Katebe.

[252] Chapter 12

King and State

The King. The power of the king is the active factor in the formation of the state in Ruanda which has influenced the passive factor, clan organization. The entire state is nothing more than the overgrown household of the king, into which all the Batutsi clans were first drawn and then absorbed. As the imperial household grew, the Bahutu clans were likewise drawn into its sphere of influence. They underwent a process of disintegration and differentiation which is still going on. In fact, in the northern part of Ruanda the process is still in its beginning stages.

In speaking of the clan communities of Katebe and Kitebe in Bugoye, we mentioned the bagaragu (clients) who come from another district and attach themselves to the powerful in order to serve them and to get their living from them. Some among these hope to be granted a goat or even a cow. Among the clan elders, for example, Lukara, who enjoyed great influence in his clan, the number of these clients was large. He granted them parcels of land on which they could settle under his protection. The same thing goes on in the court of the king, with some modification and on a far greater scale. The king's bagaragu are not poor devils who have been exiled, but influential people with large retinues who in turn have dependents and subdependents. In this respect the Ruanda state is a pyramid with the king at the head and the free farm population without property at its base. In between are the high chiefs with their subchiefs as the organizing element that keeps the population in check.

Juhi Musinga, the ruler of Ruanda, was without doubt the most powerful of the native potentates whom I had an opportunity to see

traveling basket with small white beads. For two years his people had to gather these beads, [258] a ransom which was designed not to increase the delight of the subjects with their master. When he saw that the basket was being filled too quickly, the king decided that the cure for the man's attitude was not sufficiently complete and made him fill a storehouse (kigega) with hoes. Only then did Musinga permit him to go home.

Thus, next to the splitting up of property, the sojourn at court is the most important factor in the organization and stabilization of the Ruanda state. To a certain extent this ensures against all eventualities. As long as the chief, the most important person in his territory, remains at court, the king holds all the chief's lands in his own hands to a certain extent.

The local taxation system is also closely connected with the sojourn of the bagaragu at court. The high chiefs must give the king gifts as large as possible in order not to lose favor. On the other hand, they must not demand too much of their people who might otherwise move away. This restricts them in two directions. It is left to them to strike a balance between these two factors, and the result is that the individual personality of the chief plays a much greater role than is the case in corresponding positions in our modern state.

The Royal Court. The court of the king consists of the representatives of the aristocracy, who make up a large majority of his bagaragu and hold various offices, and all kinds of minor officials who serve the ruler. The feudal lords and their retinues make up the bulk of the population of Nyanza, but they come and then go back again to their holdings when the king gives his permission. Thus, the size of the court fluctuates considerably. During the visit of His Highness the Duke of Mecklenburg there was great excitement at Musinga's court, and the whole courtyard in front of the house was always full of people. Taps were postponed accordingly, and one usually did not hear them until around two o'clock in the morning, sometimes even later.

This, however, was not the usual picture of life at court. Everyone was so worn out by all the festivities that after the departure of His Highness the courtyard was quite empty. When I came to call the day after the expedition had departed, I did not find a single chief paying court to the king.

634 somewhat different. The most important personality after the chief is his brother. He represents him in all matters. Both of them have their houses in the individual villages in which they live during their journeys. The son ranks just below the brother of his father and is granted a village after he has grown up. He is not entitled to gifts in the other villages of his father, and only if he has [267] no uncle does he get an uncle's rank. In spite of this preference, the brother of the chief is not his heir; all his possessions go to the son after the burial of the father.

622 563 Below the kissonga are the quite unimportant subchiefs who supervise the communities on the separate hills. Among them there are everywhere, especially in Bugoye, many Bahutu, whereas the higher positions are almost always held by Batutsi. It is only in Mulera and Bgisha that one sees Bahutu also occupying the highest positions.

The Bahutu officials are very much praised by their superiors, for no one can be more merciless and servile than an upstart who is hated by his clansmen. This characterization does not, of course, apply to the clan elders who occupy this position in the free farm communities. The subchiefs are the only cattle-owning Bahutu outside of Mulera, Bgisha, and Bugoye.

642 631 There is no doubt that with the extensive interweaving of property belonging to individual high chiefs (in this respect the whole country resembles a village with a community system of planting [Flurzwang]) an influential stratum is created which has vital interests in the most diverse parts of the country. This counteracts the centrifugal, particularistic tendencies of the individual provinces.

642 631 643 These conditions seem to be the result of a conscious aim on the part of the crown. In this direction much seems to have been accomplished by Lwabugiri Kigeri, the father of the present ruler, Musinga. Kigeri is reputed to have centralized the state and partitioned, scattered, and interwoven the holdings of the chiefs in order to destroy the centrifugal tendencies of the feudal lords. This involved him in bitter struggles with the lords, among them his brother-in-law, Kabare, but he managed to crown his efforts with success.

631 642 The modern European who is accustomed to sharply demarcated administrative districts and has no idea of social equilibrium based on the interweaving of economic interests finds this principle of administration absurd. That is how Captain Göring (1)

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1. Captain Göring, "Zu den Unruhen in Urundi [On the Unrest in Urundi]," Deutsches Kolonialblatt, 1911, p. 552.

judged conditions in Urundi. He says: "The division of the country is entirely without system. One often finds watuale who own various lands widely separated from each other."

I was told that Lwabugiri's policy is being followed by Musinga. He is said to prefer appointing chiefs who are directly responsible to him and to give them lands. These unimportant, free persons, mindful of the king's protection, form an element [268] independent of and even hostile to the high chiefs. They guard their own interests and resist the particularistic tendencies of the powerful.

This policy tends to erase the boundaries of individual provinces, and one encounters great difficulties if he asks about the political division of the country.

After this brief discussion of the central organization of the state which is made up of the king and a dozen and a half powerful feudal lords, we shall now touch on the political conditions in the individual sections.

The organization of Kissaka has the following pattern. The largest part of the country is divided among three large feudal lords, Kanuma, Niamutezi, and Lutangabo. Their lands are interspersed in such a way that no separate provinces can be formed. This increases their opposition to each other. Hence the dignitaries check on one another and fight one another with accusations and intrigues. In this way mutual control, which is very useful to the state, is established, as well as a quite stable equilibrium.

These three high chiefs of Kissaka live almost constantly at the court of Musinga in Nyanza, and when they obtain permission to visit their holdings, their sons remain behind as valuable hostages, a guarantee against possible separatistic

631 642 tendencies of their fathers. Count Von Götzen (1) mentions

1. Götzen, Count Von, Durch Afrika von Ost nach West [Through Africa from East to West] (Berlin, 1899), pp. 156, 159.

only one governor of Kissaka, namely, Kavahigi, but he also speaks of Kaware (Kabare) in the northern part of the country.

621 631 The hill (kashozi) is the smallest political unit in Kissaka, as well as in all the rest of Ruanda. The inhabitants of a hill belong to different clans, and the factor uniting them is purely political. It is primarily the chief, to whom compulsory service [622] (buletwa) must be paid. This official is likewise appointed by the high chief. However, the very large hills are not infrequently divided into subgroups with different subchiefs. Thus, the hill known as Bare in Nsasa is divided into the communities of Bare, Ishua, Kibare, and some others.

621 614 In Mulera where there are very few Batutsi and these have no great power, much more primitive conditions have been preserved. Here too, however, political units are represented by hills, but each hill has a homogeneous population, consisting of the members of the clan. These communities are directly subordinate to the king and, through their elders, pay taxes to the [65] king's deputies. Here the mutware, the integrating factor, is absent. On the few hills [269] in Mulera belonging to Batutsi, however, we find conditions similar to those in Kissaka. Here, [651] also, taxes are paid to the chiefs and not to the king's deputies. I believe that the Bahutu on these hills must also render compulsory service.

Ndorwa is a country that is only under nominal rule and does not pay taxes to Musinga. We find here the same clan communities, but they are completely independent, small political units.

Besides the two extreme forms, the community settled on alien land granted to the chief by the king, which the chief represents at court, and the free clan community settled on its own land and paying taxes to the king's deputy but having no

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● 642

[Information on the Biru, a body of ranked dignitaries in the Ruanda central government, will be found in category 645.]

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CHAPTER II

THE SYSTEM OF KINSHIP AND AFFINITY[1]

I. DESCENT GROUPS

AMONG the Ruanda people, Tutsi as well as Hutu, the social principle of descent was agnatic. When any informant is asked who are his ascendants, he always answers by giving the names of his father, his paternal grandfather, his paternal great grandfather up to some male ancestor beyond whom he is unable to go. He does not mention his mother nor any of her ascendants.

Questions on the actual groupings founded on this principle and their functions elicit less unanimous and clear answers. The reason is that kinship groups have undoubtedly undergone a slow process of change in several respects during the Tutsi occupation of the country. What we know of its history[2] is quite sufficient to convince us that there has been a progressive territorial expansion under one dynasty of rulers together with an intensification of the

[1] In order to make clear the connotations of the main concepts used in this chapter, here are a few definitions:

Ego's *kin* are his socially recognized relatives to whom he is connected through parent-child and-or sibling links. *Consanguineal* and *cognatic* relatives are used as synonyms for kin.

Ego's *affines* are his socially recognized relatives to whom he is connected through a marriage link. This link may be the first traced from Ego (the affines are then Ego's spouse's kin) or the kinship link may be the first one traced (the affines are then Ego's kin's spouse).

Ego's *patrilineal* or *agnatic* relatives are those of his kin who descend by male links from the same male ancestor as Ego.

Ego's *matrilineal* or *uterine* relatives are those of his kin who descend by female links from the same ancestress as Ego.

Ego's *cross-line* relatives are those of his kin who are neither patrilineally nor matrilineally related to him.

Ego's *paternal* or *patrilateral* relatives are those of his kin to whom he is connected through his father.

Ego's *maternal* or *matrilateral* relatives are those of his kin to whom he is connected through his mother.

To sum up:

- *Relatives*
  - are *kin* (or consanguineal relatives or cognates) who can be distinguished as
    - 1. patrilineal (or agnatic)
    - 2. matrilineal (or uterine)
    - 3. cross-line
  - of as
    - 1. paternal (or patrilateral)
    - 2. maternal (or matrilateral)
  - and *affines* who can be distinguished as
    - 1. kin of Ego's spouse
    - 2. spouses of Ego's kin.

[2] See for instance, Pagès, 1933.

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degrees of control exerted by that central authority on the territory. These processes have necessarily had an impact on the autonomy and social significance of Hutu and Tutsi kinship groups, on their connexion with a particular tract of land, and on their functions. We shall not be concerned here with any reconstruction of these processes but only with them as they existed in the immediate pre-European days. It should be borne in mind, however, that this was the period of an evolution. This explains the sometimes confused picture given by some informants.

(*a*) *Inzu, ubwoko, umulyango*

Hutu and Tutsi recognized a patrilineal kin group (*inzu*)[3] which included all who could actually trace their agnatic relationship through usually no more than four or five ascendent genealogical links to an ancestor recognized as the original ancestor of the group.

Members of the inzu of a male Ego were: Br, Si, Fa, FaSi, FaBr, FaBrSo, FaBrDa, FaFa, FaFaBr, FaFaSi, FaFaBrSo, FaFaBrDa, FaFaBrSoSo, FaFaBrSoDa.[4]

Ego's sororal nephews and nieces (SiSo, SiDa) and his paternal cross-cousins (FaSiSo and FaSiDa) did not belong to his *inzu*. However they participated in some of its activities if they lived with their maternal uncle (Ego), which happened when the bride-wealth for their mother (Ego's Si) had not been entirely paid.

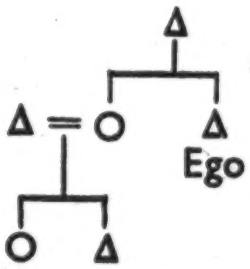

Diagram A.

Other generations above Ego's (that of FaFaFa, &c.) or under his (that of SoSoSo, &c.), were not necessarily included in Ego's

[3] *Inzu* means also hut.
[4] I follow the symbolization system used by Murdock, 1949.

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(d) Intergroup political relations

121 Intergroup political relations are essentially different. They do not imply inferiority and superiority. The opposite assumption is made: the two groups are supposed to be independent and equal. If by diplomacy or by war one succeeds in subduing the other, the subsequent unequal relations will be more similar to intragroup than to intergroup political relations.

If our definition of intragroup political organization be accepted, the word 'political' when applied to intergroup relations conveys a different and derivative meaning. Those who control legitimate coercion within a social structure are also those who are qualified to enter into intergroup relations. Subjects do not represent their own group, only rulers do. The ability to deal with intergroup relations results from a superior situation in internal political relations. In that sense, the political external relations may be said to be secondary. In the following account of Ruanda political organization the emphasis will be on the primary political relations, the internal ones.

• • •

642 571 In Ruanda, there were two types of relationships sanctioned by legitimate coercion on the part of the superior. Consequently we may distinguish within the political organization two structures which may be termed administrative and military. Another system of social relations was the clientage structure or the feudal organization. It occupied an intermediate position between the political and the private spheres. It was not purely political, but it was much more than a private agreement such as a loan. Consequently the feudal relations in Ruanda will be considered in close connexion with the administrative and military ones.

[183] 641 The three structures were interwoven and interconnected at each level. This was particularly the case at the top and at the bottom. The mwami held the supreme position in the three systems and the commoners were taxpayers, members of an army, and clients. In the intermediate levels it happened, too, that a superior and an inferior were linked by several ties: one could be at the same time the lord and the cattle-chief of an individual, and the client of one's army chief.

I shall describe and analyse each structure separately.

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necessary to the warriors during the expeditions, and being liable for various services.

(*c*) *Army and lineage*

In its herdsmen's section, an army was constituted of patrilineages rather than individuals. According to 100 per cent. of the informants, the inzu head was the necessary intermediary between the army-chief and the army members of his lineage. He had the important task of apportioning the dues incumbent on the lineage between the different family heads. For instance when the numbering took place, he decided who was going to give, say, the three cows which were due by the lineage as such.

This connexion between the army, a group founded on a wide territorial basis, and the lineage, a group based on kinship, was very significant from two points of view.

Firstly, social cohesion was favoured and strengthened by the integration into one single structure of two systems which embodied different principles of grouping. In some other societies such systems remained independent. In Ruanda they formed a supple and strong network by which each Ruanda was tied to a political structure through a kinship structure.

Secondly, the authority of the inzu head over his kinsmen was limited by his incorporation in the military structure. In some circumstances an inzu member could ignore the authority of his inzu head and with the protection of his army-chief, remain independently in the army. At the numbering of cattle, for instance, he could present his own cattle separately from those of his patrilineage. This was, of course, advantageous for the chief who could claim a proportion of the cattle of the lineage plus a fraction of the cattle of the independent member. The lineage members could also bring a charge against their inzu chief before the army-chief, who could sometimes dismiss him. This limited the power of the lineage head and incited him to remain on good terms at the same time with his army-chief and the members of his inzu. This principle limiting the power of intermediary chiefs by the direct recourse of their subordinates to a superior authority had other applications in the Ruanda political organization. Its function was to reinforce the authority of the superior chief and to protect subordinates by giving them the possibility of resisting

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their immediate superiors without endangering the principle of authority and social discipline.

From the point of view of social cohesion between the different strata of the population, it should be mentioned also that Tutsi, Hutu, and Twa were affiliated to the same army. But as the last two groups had only a secondary and not a fighting role in war, one cannot think that their association with the army was extremely important in this respect.

(*d*) *Redistribution of wealth*

Within Ruanda society, the main function of the army was that it acted as an agency for the redistribution of wealth, i.e. consumption goods and cattle.

Fresh milk provided by the *inkuke*, milk brought in jars, agricultural produce, spoils of the chase, pottery, butcher's meat, and steers utilized for divination purposes were consumption goods. Included in this category was statute labour (building and repairing royal enclosures). Most of these goods could not be kept for a long time and had thus to be provided regularly. This kind of tribute is characteristic of cultures which have neither a sufficient knowledge of the means of storing perishable goods nor a standard value of exchange permitting the dues to be collected in 'money'.

The beneficiary was the king. In this respect the army fulfilled a function very similar to that of the administrative structure.

A second category of wealth redistributed through the channel of the army was cattle. They constituted a special category of goods because of the particular significance of their possession in Ruanda society. Cattle, whatever their economic value, had a unique prestige value. One was as proud to be the owner of a beautiful herd of long-horned cows as, in some other societies, to possess race-horses. During the European Middle Ages, a noble had to have some landed property. Without going down in public estimation and losing his status, he could not have exchanged his real estate for gold and other goods of that kind even if they were 'worth' much more. Cattle in Ruanda were also noblemen's property. A Tutsi who did not own any cattle was still a Tutsi but a very poor one, dangerously slipping down in the social stratification, whereas a Hutu who possessed cattle was very near the aristocratic group and not infrequently could marry a Tutsi girl.

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The army organization was also a factor for maintenance of the
701 social order by the protective function of the army-chiefs. A minimum of individual security must be granted to every member of a society. The support of the army-chief secured partly that minimum of security. The protection against incursions of enemies was also provided by the army as such. Finally, the participation of
564 Hutu and Twa in foreign expeditions, although extremely re-
186 stricted, certainly contributed to the formation of a Ruanda 'national' feeling.

6. THE CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

642 In the administrative and military structures, the king was the supreme political authority of Ruanda. Very closely associated with him was the queen-mother, who had an official role in the political sphere. Next, the highest dignitaries of the kingdom were the *biru*, guardians of traditions concerning the important events of the collective life of Ruanda. Finally, there was the council of the great chiefs. These four institutions may be regarded as having constituted the main element of the central government of Ruanda.

(*a*) *The king*

643 The theory of the Ruanda kingship was that the mwami was an absolute monarch in the fullest sense. There was no stated limit to his powers over the inhabitants, cattle, land, and even commodities of his country. His powers were not delegated by any authority and thus he had not to render an account of them to anybody. He was the supreme judge: his sentences were without appeal. He was the legislator having the right to change customs.

This theory of the king's powers was founded on their divine origin as mentioned earlier. The bami (plural of mwami) were very careful not to let their subjects forget their heavenly origin. Many rites stressed that they did not participate in the common nature of other men. This was also the reason why special words were used to indicate their common activities and the everyday objects they used (as for 'to get up', 'it is raining on the king's hut', 'his bed', 'his house', etc.). It was thus emphasized that in spite of their appearances, these activities and objects were fundamentally different from what they were for ordinary people.[88]

In fact the king's powers were of course limited. He had to respect the vested interests of important Tutsi lineages, he had to

[88] Pagès, 1933, pp. 491 f.

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The most important *biru* were the three to whom the king communicated the name of his successor and the recommendations he wanted them to transmit to the new king later. There were about a dozen main *biru* offices. These important *biru* had assistants from their lineages, prospective successors whom they gradually trained in order that the oral traditions should not be lost.

Biru had to memorize secret rules, governing for instance the order according to which queens would be chosen from different descent groups, the ritual to observe in case of spreading of cattle disease, lack of abundance of rain, warlike ceremonies, celebrations of the sorghum harvests, &c.

The *biru* institution safeguarded the interests of the great Tutsi descent groups. This function appears clearly in the determination made for several reigns in advance of the secondary lineages and clans from which the queens should be successively chosen. The *biru*, as representatives of their kinship groups had, as it were, established the order in which the interests of different clans and lineages would be favoured in turn.

No one *mwiru* knew the entire body of customs. That knowledge was divided into parts, the remembering of each being entrusted to a *mwiru*, that is to say a descent group, as the office was hereditary. In this way it may be said that the exclusive knowledge of a part of the most important Ruanda ritual had become almost the property of each great Tutsi descent group.

A second function of the *biru* institution was to secure the continuity and the prevalence of the tradition which could have been endangered by the very considerable powers of the king. That traditional body was not unlike a constitution in a modern state and the *biru* institution could be said to have had a role similar to that of a supreme court judging whether a new rule is compatible with the fundamental charter of the country. Of course they had explicitly neither such a task nor such institutionalized means to prevent the mwami from establishing new rules, but the disapproval of an innovation by the *biru* was not to be taken lightly as they represented the great Tutsi kinship groups.

To assess more exactly the function of this institution, one should know more about it. The present day *biru* are still very reluctant to provide information and still less to let it be published, in spite of the encouragement to do so that they receive from the king.[28]

[28] See Kagame, 1947a.

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when the client was Hutu and *ingabane* when he was Tutsi. A *garagu* could have cows from another source (called *imbata*) such as those received as bride-wealth, as a reward for bravery or acquired by exchanging other goods. In the case of a Hutu client, who possessed both *inkazibiti* and *imbata* at the time when his relation with a *shebuja* was broken off, there are two opinions with regard to the cows' ownership. According to the first, the *imbata* possessed by the client before he entered in the *buhake* relation were regarded as *inkazibiti* and consequently the lord had the same rights over them as over those he had given to the client as cows of *buhake*. Moreover, the cows which the client eventually acquired when he was already *garagu*, and which in other circumstances would have been regarded as *imbata*, were also added to the cows received from the lord. The result was that at the breaking off of the *buhake* relation, the patron could take all his client's cows, *imbata* as well as *inkazibiti*. The other opinion is that the *imbata* acquired by the client before or after the *buhake* relation began, remained definitely *imbata* and that the lord had no claim on them.

It seems that both opinions are accurate, but that they refer to different periods. The second probably expresses the most ancient rule which had been prevalent up to about 1920. The practice of merging *imbata* and *inkazibiti* (or *ingabane*) in favour of the lord is likely to have been introduced only during the last forty years. This would be due to the fact that the chiefs of the administrative divisions (recognized by the Belgian authority under the names of *chefferies* and *sous-chefferies*) assumed at the end of the reign of king Yuhi Musinga (who was dismissed from his royal charge by the Belgian Administration in 1931) an undue importance, because their powers were no longer counterbalanced by those of the chiefs of the other hierarchies. Army chiefs did not enjoy their former authority, as the military structure had received no official recognition; Musinga, isolated in an attitude of indifference and hostility towards Europeans, was left without much effective power. Administrative chiefs who were important lords are said to have taken advantage of this situation, and to have modified the custom to their own advantage by establishing the principle of the merging of the cows received from the lord with those acquired independently of any *shebuja*.

It was not impossible, though it was rare, to be the client of

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more than one lord, I was told. Firstly, the services required were such that it was not easy for the same person to perform them twofold. Secondly, a lord did not like to enter into *buhake* relations with somebody who was already the client of another *shebuja*, because such an arrangement was very likely to result in a considerable lessening of each lord's control on his client.

2. ANALYSIS OF THE CLIENTAGE STRUCTURE

(a) *Notion of feudality*

If the term 'feudal' is to be legitimately applied to the social structure described in the preceding section, it must be understood as a notion covering more than the historical sense of that term as used when referring to the Western Middle Ages. Feudality is here an 'ideal-type' in the Weberian sense.

Feudality is a particular ordering of certain human relations. This organization is based on an agreement between two individuals who unequally partake in the symbols of wealth and power culturally recognized in their society. The person who, in that respect, is inferior to the other, asks the other for his patronage, and, as a counterpart, offers his services. This is the essence of the feudal régime which must be found in any social system qualified by that term. Feudality is manifold in its modalities. The latter differ in many respects. For instance, obligations of each party may vary and be more or less definite in measure; the symbols and proofs of the feudal relation may be very dissimilar. Thus, in the European Middle Ages, the symbol and the proof of the feudal agreement was the tenure of a tract of land granted by the man in the superior position to the other. That piece of land was called a fief and the parties concerned became suzerain and vassal as soon as the tenure had been granted and accepted.

It seems that the qualification 'feudal' may be applied to the organization of social relations between a *shebuja* and a *garagu* described in the preceding section. At the root of that relation, there are two individuals having a different social status. From one of these individuals, there is a demand for aid and protection, and from the other a promise of assistance in counterpart of services. Granting the usufruct of a few cows to the man of inferior status is the symbol and proof of the agreement.

The word 'agreement' is employed here rather than 'contract' which is more frequently used in this connexion. I do not consider

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is made narrower in order to give everybody the opportunity of obtaining sufficient personal security.

Such was, it appears, the first function of the *buhake* system in Ruanda. In that society where it was advisable to go into court accompanied by socially powerful persons, and when a Hutu possessing some wealth but no protector was risking the loss of his possessions, the feudal organization, by institutionalizing the identification of the Hutu client with the Tutsi lord, secured the necessary protection and security for the socially weak. With a few exceptions, the Twa were outside that feudal system. Their caste occupations were not compatible with cattle-rearing and made available to them other means of obtaining the personal protection of upper caste people. On the other hand, their small number made that kind of protection very effective.

(d) Social cohesion

A second function of the feudality in Ruanda was its contribution to the cohesion of the society.

In this respect we have to distinguish the feudal agreements in which clients were Hutu from those in which they were Tutsi. Let us first take the former. In order that two castes whose interests were so often divergent or opposed could constitute a stable unitary structure, it was necessary that they should not remain merely juxtaposed but should show some solidarity. Through the feudal relations economic currents flowed between Hutu and Tutsi: the land tillers had at their disposal some cattle; the pastoralists consumed agricultural produce and had fields cultivated by their servants and clients. In this way the economic system of production in Ruanda was mixed, made up of techniques, abilities, and wealth brought by the two groups. Through *buhake*, Hutu participated in the Tutsi values. They valued cattle very highly and entered the prestige system based on bovine possession. They assimilated some Tutsi alimentary habits, such as drinking milk. Feudality proved a very effective instrument for the constitution of a culture common to all Ruanda.

When there was a feudal agreement between two Tutsi, the *buhake* had another relevance to social cohesion. It may be said that any Tutsi client was also a lord and any Tutsi lord was also a client. The mwami was the only patron who was nobody's client. His *garagu* were the great Tutsi chiefs, the lords of less important

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Tutsi, who themselves were patrons of still less important Tutsi, and so on. In this way the Tutsi consituted a homogeneous unit of individuals linked to one another by bonds of fidelity and protection. From that point of view, *buhake* contributed to the unity and the solidarity of the aristocratic caste.

(*e*) *Maintenance of caste privileges*

Besides the protection of socially weak individuals and the promotion of social cohesion, a third function was fulfilled by the feudal system: the maintenance of the social *status quo* and the perpetuation of Tutsi privileges. This function seems somewhat opposed to the first two. Let us see how all these functions have been combined by the *buhake* system.

In a stratified society where control of a category of goods or a type of ownership is characteristic of the superior layer, the access of the members of other groups to these goods or to the particular rights of ownership constitutes an active factor of social mobility. It is the reason why the aristocracy frequently keeps exclusively for itself these goods and these rights. Thus in Ankole the Hima pastoralists bar Iru cultivators from the ownership of productive cows. They may possess only barren cows and bull calves.[8]

Ruanda Tutsi did not impose such severe rules but by the *buhake* system they obtained very much the same results. They allowed Hutu to have cattle at their disposal—which in exchange provided Tutsi with labour and agricultural produce—but at the same time prevented them from gaining independent ownership rights over these cattle. Those who had the final control of cattle were always Tutsi. As the Hutu had been granted only usufruct rights over cattle which were different from those enjoyed by the lords who were Tutsi, there was no chance that the group of cattle owners could be invaded by Hutu.

By definition the client's possession was precarious. This uncertainty in the duration of the disposal of cattle was further emphasized by the circumstances mentioned above. The breaking off of the *buhake* relation was almost always favourable mainly to the lord and could often be disastrous for the client. It may even be said that when the practice of merging the *buhake* cows (*inkazibiti*) with the cows not received from a lord (*imbata*) was regarded as customary, all the Hutu cattle were precariously held and under

[8] Oberg, 1940, p. 130.

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Tutsi control. A Hutu who in exchange for labour or agricultural goods had been able to acquire a few cows had necessarily to ask for the protection of a lord in order that his cows should not be seized upon under some pretence by a socially powerful neighbour. Then he received cows from his lord and they were merged with his own *imbata*. Consequently, if the agreement had to be ended, the lord could take away besides the cows he had granted, those which had previously belonged to the client.

The two political structures benefited most those among the Tutsi who were rulers. The feudal structure, by granting only a precarious possession of cattle to the clients, left in the hands of the Tutsi the ultimate control of cattle, symbol of social prestige and instrument of power. On the other hand, by the same *buhake*, Tutsi were obtaining the advantages of being provided with labour and agricultural produce. From that standpoint, the Ruanda feudal system granted a minority the means to live—and to live better than the bulk of the population—without having to participate in the manual labour of economic production, by the moderate and clever exploitation of the majority.

In order that an aristocratic structure may perpetuate itself without change as long as it is profitable to the superior caste, it is not sufficient to prevent an invasion or even an infiltration of members of inferior groups who, by modifying the proportion between exploiters and exploited, would completely disturb the smooth working of the system. It is also necessary that all those who are by birth members of the upper caste should live according to the standards of their group. It is most unusual for an upper caste to regard the falling off of some of its members without uneasiness and dismay. This is particularly true when the group position of power is rationalized in terms of innate superiority. Some modern governments in Africa, for example, are much concerned about the 'poor whites' because their decadence threatens the myth of the white racial superiority.

The Tutsi had a similar pretence to a natural superiority as has been pointed out already. Consequently, if one of them was unable to support himself in a way becoming to his caste and seemed on the point of slipping down into the group of those who work manually, it was regarded as a shocking situation that should at once be put right. The remedy was to become the client of a richer Tutsi. The cows thus received, allowed him to subsist in

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such a way that he could become the patron of a few Hutu who would work for him and cultivate his fields. On the other hand, while the lord of such a Tutsi would not get many material advantages from him, his social prestige was enhanced by an increase in his following, and by being advised by a trusty Tutsi he was able to exert a greater influence in the different intrigues which played such an important part in his life.

(f) Feudal and political structures

We have said earlier that the Ruanda clientage system occupied an intermediate position between the public and private spheres. It must now appear more clearly why *buhake* was not just a private agreement between two persons, such as a loan. The element of pressure, although not going usually as far as the use of physical force, was certainly an important aspect of that relationship. There was also a constant interplay of the feudal structure of the two political ones (administrative and military). When, as frequently happened, one was at the same time administratively subjected to and a client of one's hill-chief, a client's obligations were not merely added to a subject's tribute: the total amount was reduced. This was a very favourable situation for the subject-client. All the great political chiefs were also rich lords. Their political offices helped them to increase their clientage, as is particularly evident in the case of the army-chief who could require cows from the army members merely in order to be able to gain more clients. On the other hand their wealth helped them to obtain important offices and to keep them.

It would be impossible, for these reasons, to describe adequately the working of the two political structures in Ruanda without describing the feudal system as well. It might even be said that the *buhake* is more fundamental in the sense that many political relations have been patterned on the client—lord relation. For instance, the army chief was really a lord for the members of the herdsmen's section of his army.

In spite of the psychological and perhaps historical precedence of the feudal system, it has been described after political organization because, as I wish to focus attention on the political organization, it seemed that the role of the feudal system in that respect would emerge more clearly.

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One may wonder whether this demographic factor appeared to the Tutsi as a purely natural fact completely beyond their control, or whether they tried to maintain that fortunate proportion. We know that they made it difficult for a Hutu to enter their caste, but it does not seem that they favoured a restriction in the number of their group and an increase in the Hutu group. They shared with the Hutu a very high valuation of fertility and appreciated families with numerous offspring. It should not be forgotten that if a decrease in population would have contributed towards giving each member of the Tutsi caste a greater share in the wealth of the group in an imperceptible degree, for the individual, to have many children was a way to obtain also a greater share of wealth in a very perceptible manner. I suspect that the latter consideration was much clearer than the former for any Tutsi. It is also questionable if the bringing about of the first situation would have been psychologically compatible with the attitude of self-assertion of a domineering caste of warriors. At all events the demographic situation of Ruanda has been a factor favouring, even making possible, the economic exploitation of a majority by a minority.

A third factor which made the second so crucial was the type of economy of the country. Because of the relatively poor soil, the irregularity of the rains, and the methods of cultivation, there was not a very considerable surplus. Having to subsist on a very limited national income, the rulers had to cope with an economic problem in the fundamental meaning of the term—that is, they had to organize a way of life with means insufficient to meet needs. This emphasized the capital importance of compulsory labour and tributes, of regular and efficient collection, and of an apportionment of levies which did not let any prospective taxpayer escape.

A limited character of national resources is certainly a circumstance adverse to the centralization of a government. Indeed, a very centralized government needs a complex machinery: agencies, army, messengers, civil servants, local delegates, &c. Such an organization had been built up in Ruanda in spite of the small economic surplus.

A biological element also has been significant in the establishment and maintenance of Tutsi power in Ruanda. This was the difference in physical appearance between Tutsi and Hutu. Whatever may be the objectivity of physical caste characteristics,

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of their different nature which entitled them to rule and as a guarantee against social mobility: because a Hutu was usually not endowed with the Tutsi physical characteristics he could not easily pass the line.

Two other important elements related to the political power system of Ruanda were its extent and its orographic configuration. The country was not very large, about 100 miles from north to south and 140 from west to east. But its relief was that of a maze of hills, many of them very steep, separated by deep valleys. Moreover, it was traversed, from north to south, by a chain of mountains which separate the Congo and Nile basins and is covered with very dense forests inhabited by elephants, leopards, and buffalo.

A centralized government requires good communications. The king must remain, as much as possible, in constant contact with all the regions of his country; tribute must reach the capital regularly, armies must arrive rapidly in any place threatened by an external enemy; local authorities must not be left isolated lest they become too independent. The small extent of Ruanda was indeed an asset from this point of view but this was largely neutralized by the relief which made communications extremely difficult. Notwithstanding these unfavourable physical factors, the mwami had been able to establish and maintain his political network connecting all the subordinate authorities of Ruanda to himself.

These five elements are among those which more significantly affected the domination system of the Tutsi. They are the only ones. Three of them refer to the social power of the Tutsi caste (type of material culture, Tutsi-Hutu ratio, physical appearance), while two others (economy with a small surplus, area, and relief) were operative rather in the sphere of political power. Only two of these background facts (demographic ratio and physical type) were favourable to the domination pattern whereas one (absence of a different material equipment apart from cattle) was neutral and two (lack of a great surplus, geographic configuration) were obstacles.

2. THE SOCIOLOGICAL PROBLEM OF DOMINATION

Within the limits set by these conditions external to the social system, Tutsi had to adapt their organization in order to keep the dominant position for their caste and its rulers. Their problem

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was: how to monopolize social and political power to their benefit without preventing a Ruanda society from existing and functioning as a unity? How to realize an equilibrium between the necessities of any social life and the necessities of a permanent dominion of a group? This fundamental problem may be analysed into three antinomies: maintaining a caste society and promoting the cohesion of the society as a whole; exploiting and protecting the lower stratum; delegating powers to subordinate authorities and establishing a centralized and absolute government. How were these antinomies solved?

(*a*) *Caste society and social cohesion*

In order that the members of a dominant and hereditary group may keep their privileges, it is necessary that what gives prestige remains exclusively under their control. We have seen that in Ruanda the basis of social power and prestige lay in the effective disposal of cattle. As indicated earlier, the feudal system permitted the Tutsi to keep complete control of all Ruanda cattle, as the whole of a client's cattle was always liable to be confiscated by the lord under any pretence. Moreover, outside the *buhako* structure, the king kept the pre-eminent right over all Ruanda cattle. Even if he did not use frequently his rights against Hutu, they were not forgotten: the very cows which were not received from a lord but acquired by one's own efforts and over which the possessor had usufruct plus bare ownership, were called 'king's cows' (*inka z'umwami*) as often as *imbata*.

Usually, an upper caste shows its superiority by, among other things, its leisure and pleasant life. It has to enjoy a greater share of the good things of life than the commoners and it has to get this apparently without effort, rather as a right than as a reward for specific tasks. It was again the *buhake* which made it possible for the Tutsi caste to enjoy 'gracious living' becoming to its high social status. The man in control of a few head of cattle could, through the clientage institution, live without having to participate in the manual work of the production processes.

A third requirement for the maintenance of a caste identity is the preservation of the group's *esprit de corps* and traditions and their handing on by one generation to the next one. This was done in the kinship groups mainly by the grandparents, particularly by the paternal grandfather. There, lineage values and particular

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made for certain guarantees. For the *buhake* services, what each client had to give or do was less clearly determined and depended more on the *shebuja*'s wishes. There were also in that sphere, however, some traditionally admitted limits.

Universality and regulation of dues as such do not prevent the exactions committed by socially powerful individuals and those who required payment of taxes were powerful. Another more efficient obstacle to an exaggerated exploitation was the fact that the political and clientage structures gave to any individual of ability the opportunity to secure for himself a defender and a protector. This opportunity resulted from the plural character of the Ruanda hierarchy.

When one belongs to a single structure, there is only one immediate superior. Consequently, everything must be obtained from him and is owed to him. In a plural system, there are several immediate superiors of approximately equal rank and who are not interdependent. Consequently, it is possible to have the support of one chief (or his complicity even) when resisting another.

This is what happened in Ruanda. An example will show how the plurality of chiefs could be used. Suppose a Hutu had inherited cattle granted by a lord to his grandfather who had also received cows from his army-chief, and who had acquired other cattle by exchange of goods (*imbata*), and because his present lord was too exacting, our Hutu wanted to change and become the client of another important man. He knew that his lord would try to seize all his *imbata* and to choose the best cows among his other cattle. By some gifts, he obtained the support of his army-chief. Before entering into discussion with his lord, he and his army-chief had agreed that all the best cows he had at his disposal and all his *imbata* would be said to have been received from the military chief. They were removed and put on grazing grounds directly protected by the army-chief. Then when the lord claimed more cows than his client wanted to return to him, he had to settle the matter not with a man of very limited power but with the army-chief.

Of course this required clever handling of the situation, but when it succeeded it secured efficient protection against extortion.

It should be added that the recourse of a subject to a higher authority within the same hierarchy was approved and even encouraged in Ruanda. This was another means of putting a check on the exorbitant demands of immediate superiors. This, however,

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did not play an important part in the feudal system because there were no socially recognized ties between a client and his lord's lord. Feudality was not a ranking system in the same sense as were the political structures. Each lord had his personal following; he was not as such the representative of a higher authority.

To sum up, the political and clientage structures at the same time secured the economic exploitation of the Hutu and protected them against an exaggerated pressure which could have led to disaster for the upper caste.

(c) *Delegation and centralization of political power*

Before the European occupation the kingdom's population was already numerous, probably around 1,700,000 inhabitants. The orographic configuration of the country made communications rather difficult. In that non-literate culture, an efficient collection of tributes required almost a face to face acquaintance between the subject and his ruler. These circumstances necessitated a delegation of authority to many intermediary chiefs who would be the local representatives of the rulers.

But such an unavoidable system was very dangerous for the central government. Its subordinated agents having frequently authority over a rather numerous population which could provide them with abundant supplies (if nothing was sent to the court) could be tempted to isolate themselves completely from the capital and become independent. Such a course of action would have been facilitated by the military structure and the feudal system.

Some important chiefs were, indeed, authorized to raise an army. Moreover, any military chief whose army was encamped near the border, in a district far from the capital, could gain such ascendancy over his warriors as to win over their allegiance to himself.

The *buhake* was perhaps still more dangerous because, as in any feudal system, it created personal bonds of allegiance between the client and his lord. As such, that bond of loyalty did not extend beyond the lord. One had to obey one's lord because he was one's lord and not because he was a mwami's representative. This is why any feudal system has always been so dangerous for a central government. Independence and revolt against the king have been recurring events in the areas where a feudal system existed.

Rusanda rulers were able to check successfully these tendencies

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Ruanda rulers were able to check successfully these tendencies
towards the fragmentation of the political unity of their country,
first, by the ritual character of the royal power.

To revolt against the king, identified with Ruanda and supported by Imana, was a sacrilege and a profanation. It is not claimed that such a theory was sufficient to secure the kings with effective power indefinitely. Elsewhere similar ideologies of absolute and divine power of the monarchs have not prevented some of them from being stripped of their real authority, whereas their divine prerogatives were still respected. The ritual sanction does not seem to have had a primary importance in the maintenance of submission to the Ruanda kingship. In 1896 or 1897, a young mwami, Mibambwe IV Rutalindwa, was assailed and eventually lost his life in a revolt instigated by the brother of the queen-mother. That queen-mother was not the mother of the mwami but another wife of his father. Her clan, the Abega, wanted a son of hers as mwami.[5] This shows that when the king lost effective control of power, ritual sanctions were not an effective safeguard for his prerogatives, or even for his life. This is why it has not been thought necessary to expand on the ritual aspect of the Ruanda kingship. But it certainly was a factor which contributed to the obedience of the Ruanda nobles.

Another check was that the king kept at his disposal the coercive force of the armies. Even if the rebel had the support of one or two armies, the king had all the others.

But the main factor which I think prevented local authorities from asserting their independence from the central government, was the plural character of the political and feudal organization. In connexion with the maintenance of the effective power of the central government, this plurality of structure was a very effective means of maintaining misunderstanding, hostility, and jealousy among the subordinate chiefs. It is certain that the *shebuja* of our example in the preceding section, would have been only too glad to denounce to the mwami the army-chief if the latter was indulging in suspicious manœuvres. The co-existence of chiefs of almost the same rank who were constantly induced by their subjects to take sides in disputes was sufficient to create mistrust among themselves. Moreover, conflicts were numerous, particularly when two chiefs had the same territorial power (as in the case of the cattle- and land-chiefs). To settle conflicts they had to resort to the

[5] Pagès, 1933, pp. 195-206.

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superior authority's judgement and this increased the ruler's power over his subordinates.

This applied not only to the political organization but also to the feudal structure, which had potentially the most disruptive action on a centralized government. Indeed, the subject-client had often to ask protection and support from his political chief against his lord and from his lord against his political chief. Consequently, between the important lords, even those who were not themselves prominent in the political hierarchies, and the political chiefs, relations were often very tense. Moreover, as the very important lords who could have attempted to resist the central government held at the same time political offices, they were directly enmeshed in rivalries and jealousies.

Engendered by the hierarchic plurality, the mistrust which prevented the subordinate chiefs from uniting against the central government, which led them to spy on each other and to inform the king of anything suspect, was the main check against tendencies towards local autonomy in Ruanda. Even if that hostility between important Tutsi happened to express itself openly and violently, the central government was not very anxious to restore peace as long as troubles remained localized and did not threaten the regular collection of taxes and the authority of the king.

3. THE FUNCTION OF THE POLITICAL ORGANIZATION IN RUANDA

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At the beginning of this study, in order to delimit the social phenomena we wished to study, political organization in an intragroup context was defined as 'the totality of culturally patterned relationships between certain individuals who possess the legitimate use of physical force and all the others who inhabit at a certain time a certain territory'. This definition did not include the function of a system of political relationships because, it was stated, it is only through analysis that the function fulfilled by a set of institutions in a particular social context, may be ascertained.

In the preceding chapters, the different political structures have been analysed from a functional point of view. It will be sufficient to summarize what has been said to grasp the function of the Ruanda political organization as a whole. Here we shall consider together the feudal as well as the administrative and military systems.

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At the beginning of this century, Ruanda political organization was an instrument of social immobility. It was not a force of expansion meant to increase the Tutsi dominion over the country, but a machinery which succeeded in maintaining a difficult equilibrium between the antinomic tendencies I have reviewed. Any institution in which divergent tendencies meet and are kept balanced bears in itself the principle of its own disintegration. But in Ruanda the equilibrium problem had been so efficiently solved that it seems that an optimum point had been reached. The political organization that sustained the domination system could have been perpetuated as long as forces external and internal to the system itself remained constant. The external influence which modified the political organization has been the contact with the Europeans, another conquest group entering Ruanda history around 1900. But apart from such a consequential event, internal phenomena such as a modification in the demographic ratio, the introduction of new agricultural techniques, the impoverishment of the soil, &c., could have been sufficient to destroy the equilibrium maintained by the Tutsi political organization.

What was 'immobilized' by the political organization was the Tutsi's caste's and rulers' almost exclusive control of power. They used it for exploitation, by which is meant here the satisfaction of needs not by economic production but by pressure. I follow here closely Oppenheimer's distinction between economic and political means. Both have the same end, he writes, the satisfaction of needs. But when this end is obtained by one's labour and the equivalent exchange of one's own labour for the labour of others, one may speak of 'economic means' while the unrequited appropriation of the labour of others is 'political means'.[8] This should, however, be qualified in the *buhake* where the client received the usufruct of cattle.

It would, of course, be completely misleading to assume that Ruanda political organization had for its only function the preservation of Tutsi exploitation. Through the political structure, as has been shown, the inferior castes enjoyed security. Collectively, peasants were protected against raiding expeditions of neighbours and against an unlimited and too arbitrary exploitation. Individually, in the difficult or dangerous events of life, a Hutu could rely upon the protection of his lord, of his army-chief, and

[8] Oppenheimer, 1922, p. 25.

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of his administrative chiefs if he could not or did not wish to ask his lineage's aid.

Should one, then, speak of a counterpart and interpret the Tutsi privileges as a retribution for the care of the commonweal and public order? No, political organization in Ruanda fulfilled different functions. It cannot be said that one function is the counterpart of the other merely because it benefited different groups. It just so happened that two different functions were fulfilled by the same set of institutions.

To sum up, this political system was a means of maintaining a certain social order in which the group of rulers and their caste appropriated to their consumption a considerable part of the country's goods without having to use their labour in the productive processes.